

Sight and Sound

MUSIC

Faithfully Yours (Psalms)

By Margaret Becker,
Cross-Driven Records.

A new release brings a new sound for a familiar name. Margaret Becker produced and co-wrote the 11 songs on her first studio work for Cross Driven Records, Faithfully Yours (Psalms). Titles such as “Create in Me” and “I Enter Your House” show that this collaboration between Becker and David M. Edwards celebrates the lyrical art of the psalms and a heart of worship.

It is easy to recognize that the style and spirit of more recent psalmists, the late contemporary Christian music pioneers Keith Green and Rich Mullins, permeates the mostly acoustical tracks. There is a force behind the music that says there is an all-powerful God and He cares about our troubles. Becker and Edwards know of which they sing and provide powerful material for worship leaders.

J. James Estrada

More

By Mary Alessi, Miami Life Sounds.

Mary Alessi, a praise and worship leader, songwriter and co-pastor of Metro Life Worship Center in Miami, just released her second project recorded live at Covenant Church in Dallas. With *More*, Alessi provides the praise and worship lover with not only a great new collection of songs but also a time of intimacy with God.

Starting with beat one Alessi () gets the listener involved in the worship experience on this 13-track recording. She showcases rousing renditions of well-known tunes from Israel Houghton (of *Israel & New Breed*), including “Again I Say Rejoice” and “Another Breakthrough.” On “You’ve Made Me Glad,” Houghton leads, giving us the energetic, Spirit-filled performance we’ve become accustomed to from him.

“Praise the Lord” is a riveting anthem. “With My Whole Heart” is another feel-good, hyperactive cut. Moving into the presence of the Lord with worship, Alessi gives us “So We Lift,” a song about lifting hearts and hands to the Lord. With twin sister, Martha Munizzi, Alessi wrote the magnificent title tune, “More,” offering memorable melody and lyrics.

The theme of worship is woven in the remainder of the project, especially on the impressive track “I Worship You With All of Me.” After hearing about a tragedy in her community, Alessi wrote “Pray,” reminding us that prayer is always the answer. Listening to the blending of “Another Breakthrough,” “New Day Dawning” and “Lord of the Breakthrough,” worshipers will find themselves entering the holy of holies. Rounding out the collection, Alessi closes this solid and impressive project with the up-tempo, Latin-tinged “In Him I Live.”

René Williams

Men and Angels Say

By Ashley Cleveland, Rambler Records.

Two-time Grammy Award-winner Ashley Cleveland releases her sixth solo disc titled *Men and Angels Say*, a collection of traditional hymns of the church that Cleveland has added her unique talents to. Because of Cleveland's broad musical influences, including rock, blues and gospel, *Men and Angels Say* will appeal to a wide range of listeners.

For those who prefer a more traditional approach, such songs as the quiet "I Need Thee Every Hour" and "All Creatures of Our God and King" will please. And more contemporary arrangements of "Come Ye Sinners," "It Is Well With My Soul" and the Easter classic "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" give these hymns a new appeal. Cleveland's bold vocals never overshadow the lyrical content of the songs; instead they enhance the already rich and relevant message of each piece.

This disc runs from reverent worship to uplifting praise, always bringing a freshness to timeless classics. Uniquely arranged and updated, the 12 tracks are sure to bring back a love of the old hymns and perhaps introduce these hymns to a younger audience who may not know them.

There is something for everyone on *Men and Angels Say*, and Ashley Cleveland fans will be especially pleased as these hymns showcase this accomplished artist's vocal ability and deep love for these great songs of the church. *Men and Angels Say* is worth listening to over and over.

Debbie Gibboney

BOOKS

The Father's Embrace

By Danilo Montero,

Charisma House, softcover,

224 pages, \$.

A uthor and recording artist Danilo Montero accepted Jesus into his life at age 9, but at 19, after a period of rebellion, he found himself returning to the Lord with his whole heart. Raised in a home where his alcoholic father abused and abandoned his mother, the native Costa Rican struggled to be accepted by God as well as his earthly father. His compulsion to perform spiritually led him to intercede five hours a day and fast three or more times a week until he learned that God's love was in no way linked to his service.

Using his own testimony and accounts of biblical figures, Montero inspires and instructs, showing that human tendencies toward pride and perfectionism distract from fellowship with God, often leading to religiosity and away from true worship.

Just as he does with his popular music, worship leader Montero helps fellow believers see that worship is more than just singing praise songs on Sunday and guides them into a biblical understanding of God's character to inspire their worship. Brief, heartfelt prayers close each chapter.

Christine D. Johnson

A Woman's Forbidden Emotion

By Gary J. Oliver and H. Norman Wright,

Regal, softcover,

224 pages, \$.

It seems there is a double standard when it comes to the

emotion of anger. In men, it is viewed as being assertive, in women, it is irrational and emotional. Many women live with shame and confusion when it comes to their anger. Not only do they believe they can't be angry, they also wrestle with guilt when they feel the very way they "shouldn't" feel.

Gary J. Oliver and H. Norman Wright offer the truth about anger in *A Woman's Forbidden Emotion*. Women will feel a sense of relief but will also welcome the challenge of having the tools to know what anger is, how to understand it and what responses are appropriate.

The authors biblically prove that emotions, even anger, are God-given. Women will understand the different types and appropriate forms of anger used in the Bible. There is a difference between rage, seeking to do wrong; resentment, seeking to hide wrong; and indignation, seeking to correct wrongs—the right kind of anger.

Oliver and Wright show women that anger is "only a symptom. The real problem is our difficulty we have in identifying and understanding our anger and thereby choosing healthy ways to express it." With the truths in this book, women can experience freedom to move into a new era as they assert themselves with the correct response and with the right attitude.

Leigh DeVore

FICTION

The Warrior

By Francine Rivers, Tyndale House

Publishers, hardcover, 232
pages, \$.

Second in Francine Rivers' Sons of Encouragement series, The Warrior examines the life and faith of Caleb. Marvelously, Rivers weaves known and little known facts about the biblical hero's background, producing valuable insights into his character formation and motivations.

Caleb certainly turns out to be the uncompromising warrior, but the reader sees that the journey taught him to fear the Lord above all else. It also demonstrates how he grieves over the unbelief of his people and how he tempered his zeal with patience and compassion in his dealing with his brethren.

In the end the focus comes back to the fact that the battle is within as well as without as our hero fights not only ungodly pagans, but also his own bent to sin as well. Hope for ultimate victory clearly rests in God's unfailing love and redemption. As in the Lineage of Grace series, this series encourages readers to go to the Bible for further study and provides questions and points to ponder to encourage the reader to go deeper.

Deborah L. Delk

A Thousand Tomorrows
By Karen Kingsbury,
Center Street (Warner Faith),
hardcover, 256 pages, \$.

A ward-winning author Karen Kingsbury grabs readers' attention with the very first scene in A Thousand Tomorrows. She ushers her audience into an emotional tale about a boy whose fury

only intensifies as he becomes a man. Cody Gunner's anger fuels him to become the best bull rider around. On the rodeo circuit, Cody meets Ali Daniels, an expert horse rider with a secret to protect. Both have to decide whether or not to allow each other into their lives. Only one thing can break through their hidden dreams and hurts—love.

Leigh DeVore

Billy Goat Hill

By Mark Stanleigh Morris,
Multnomah Publishers,
Hardcover, 450 pages, \$.

God uses even fiction to bring people into a relationship with Him. Mark Stanleigh Morris became a Christian after writing the original version of Billy Goat Hill. The book reveals Morris' talent, as he seems to write in color. The vivid descriptions will capture readers from the get-go. Eight-year-old Wade Parker and 6-year-old brother Luke explore their town, often getting into dangerous situations. During one excursion Wade does the unimaginable, and Luke sees it happen. Then Wade sets off on a journey to find God. This novel focuses on forgiveness and salvation.

Leigh DeVore

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Patricia Bailey Calls for Courage

Evangelist Patricia Bailey wants women to “reach higher, stand stronger, push harder” in her recent release, *Women Risktakers* (Harrison House). She examines the lives of Abigail, Hagar,

Jochebed and others.

Bailey is a risktaker herself. She has ministered around the globe for more than 20 years, and for the last 10 of those her ministry focus has been on the 10/40 window—the most densely populated but least evangelized area of the world.

“I grew up seeing churches on every corner and it seemed like taking water to the ocean to just stay here. And I just wanted to go where He needed me the most. ... I began to prepare to minister to Muslims.

“What kind of sense does that make—for an African-American, single woman to be called to teach Arab men and train Arab men? Only God could do it.”

Like the apostle Paul, Bailey identifies with the people. “My life is their life. I dress like them. I eat like them. ... I live out in the camps. ... You’ve got to get out there and get with the people and that’s why they embrace you.

“We experience God in His greatest manifestation as we serve each other. ... That’s ministry. So I don’t look at it as some kind of mission impossible. I see it as a simple lady who fell in love with her Master, and she goes out to try to represent His love to those who don’t know Him. ... I just believe He goes ahead of me, and if He will never leave me or forsake me, that’s what works for me.”

Valerie G. Lowe